

In The Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-20 without prejudice and add new claims 21-40 as follows:

21. (New) A method of adjusting a pressure of a circulating fluid in a wellbore relative to a pressure in a formation of interest adjacent the wellbore, comprising:

drilling in the formation of interest; and

adding energy to the circulating fluid in an annulus between a drill string and a wall of the wellbore at one or more predetermined locations therein above the formation, thereby changing a difference between the pressure of the circulating fluid and the pressure in the formation.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the difference between the pressure of the circulating fluid and the pressure in the formation of interest is selected such that the pressure of the circulating fluid prevents a formation fluid from flowing into the wellbore, without damaging the formation.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the pressure of the circulating fluid above at least one of the one or more predetermined locations is higher than the pressure of the circulating fluid in communication with the formation.

24. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the pressure of the circulating fluid in communication with the formation is lower than the pressure in the formation.

25. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the formation is a hydrocarbon-bearing formation.

26. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein energy is added to the circulating fluid at at least one of the one or more predetermined locations by one or more pump arrangements.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is driven by a fluid flowing through the drill string.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is electrically powered.

29. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is driven by rotation of the drill string.

30. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising flowing a portion of the circulating fluid directly from the drill string bore to the annulus above at least one of the one or more predetermined locations.

31. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the pressure of the circulating fluid in communication with the formation is lower than hydrostatic pressure.

32. (New) A method of redistributing forces within a wellbore, comprising:
drilling in a formation of interest; and
adding energy in an upward direction to the circulating fluid in an annulus between a drill string and a wall of the wellbore at one or more predetermined locations therein above the formation, thereby decreasing the weight of the circulating fluid in the annulus and increasing the weight of the drill string.

33. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the formation is a hydrocarbon-bearing formation.

34. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein energy is added to the circulating fluid at at least one of the one or more predetermined locations by one or more pump arrangements.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is driven by a fluid flowing through the drill string.

36. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is electrically powered.

37. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein at least one of the one or more pump arrangements is driven by rotation of a drill string.

38. (New) The method of claim 32, further comprising flowing a portion of the circulating fluid directly from the drill string bore to the annulus above at least one of the one or more predetermined locations.

39. (New) An apparatus for redistributing forces within a wellbore, comprising:
a drill bit mounted on a tubular drill string for extending through a wellbore and drilling through a formation containing fluid;
means for circulating drilling fluid down through the drill string to exit the string at or adjacent the bit and enter an annulus between the string and a wall of the wellbore, and then continuously upwards through the annulus; and
means for adding energy to the drilling fluid in the annulus above the formation such that the weight of the circulating fluid in the annulus is decreased and the weight of a drill string is increased.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the formation is a hydrocarbon-bearing formation.

In The Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 4. This sheet, which includes Figure 4, replaces the original sheet including Figure 4.

In Figure 4, previously mislabeled element 50 has been correctly labeled. Please amend and admit Figure 4 as shown in the attached sheet.

Attachments: Replacement Sheet
 Annotated Sheet Showing Change